

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

S E C R E T BANGKOK 17095

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE EXPULSION OF LAO RIGHTISTS FROM THAILAND

1. IN THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI TODAY, HE TOLD ME THAT HE WAS GIVING URGENT CONSIDERATION TO EXPELLING SOME LAO RIGHTIST LEADERS WHO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN THAILAND. HE SAID THAT THE LAO GOVERNMENT CONTINUALLY ACCUSED THAILAND OF PLOTTING WITH THESE INDIVIDUALS FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE PGNU AND THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION HE COULD SEE WAS TO TELL THEM TO GO AND LIVE ELSEWHERE.

2. I REPLIED THAT THESE WERE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF THAILAND OVER THE YEARS. TO MY KNOWLEDGE THEY HAD SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THEIR EXPULSION BY THE RTG WOULD BE UNFAIR AND WOULD LEAD TO A GOOD DEAL OF CRITICAL COMMENT. I COMMENTED THAT ON THE BASIS OF MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE PATHET LAO THEY WERE PARANOID ON THE SUBJECT OF PLOTS BEING HATCHED BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE THAI. IF THE RTG EXPELLED SOME OF THE FORMER MINISTERS, THE PGNU WOULD CONTINUE TO PRETEND THAT PLOTS WERE BEING HATCHED BY THE GENERALS WHO WERE HERE. IF THEY EXPELLED THE GENERALS, IT WOULD THEN BE THE COLONELS, ETC., ETC. I TOLD

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CHATCHAI THAT DURING MY TIME IN VIENTIANE, I HAD

VIRTUALLY NEVER SEEN FONMIN PHOUMI WITHOUT HIS MENTIONING THE FACT THAT HE HAD "RELIABLE" REPORTS THAT THE AMERICANS AND THE THAI WERE FOMENTING A COUP. ON THE OCCASIONS ON WHICH HE DID NOT ALLUDE TO COUP PLOTTING, HE WAS APT TO SAY THAT THAI AND U.S. FORCES WERE STILL LURKING IN LAOS. I HAD REPEATEDLY AFFIRMED THAT THESE CHARGES WERE ABSURD BUT THE PATHET LAO LIVED IN A WORLD IN WHICH THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY WERE SURROUNDED BY MENACING PHANTOMS SERVED THEIR PURPOSES.

3. THESE REMARKS SEEMED TO COOL CHATCHAI A LITTLE. I AM INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT HE CAN GET THE PRIME MINISTER'S AGREEMENT TO EXPELLING THE HANDFUL OF DOWN-ON-THEIR-LUCK LAO MINISTERS WHO ARE RESIDING IN THAILAND.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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